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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Statement submitted by the International Federation on Ageing, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Population ageing is unprecedented; today there are 600 million people in the world aged 60 years and over. This figure is expected to double by 2025 and to reach 2 billion by 2050, the vast majority of older people live in the developing world.

As populations age special priority must be given to the needs and rights of older people who often bear the greatest burden of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, which often results in isolation, marginalization and violence.

More than 1 billion people in the world live in abject poverty. It is well known that a large proportion of these people are women and older people, having limited access to income, resources, education, nutrition and healthcare, particularly in the developing and least developed countries.

Civil society and governments must be partners in multidimensional and integrated approaches that support older persons in the quest to develop and maintain an improved quality of life. This approach benefits all in Building a Society for All Ages. Older persons must be viewed and utilized as resources, not burdens; as persons who can enrich their local and national communities. Older people, as all people, must be included at the center of development in terms of policy and regulatory development and in their implementation to ensure their equal involvement in:

- Economic and social protection and a chance to participate in community life through employment, volunteer work or other activities
- Lifelong learning toward realizing their potential in health, dignity and participation in the process of social development.
- Access to productive resources, including credit, land, education and training, as well as to public services, especially in poverty stricken areas of the world

In summary, the International Federation on Ageing believes that member states need to recognize and make serious efforts to incorporate older persons in decision-making regarding policies, programs and regulations affecting them and their families. This would enable and encourage older persons to be true participants in active, positive and productive roles. Social development as outlined in the World Summit's Commitments formulated ten years ago and renewed five years ago, requires that all people, including ageing populations, are fully engaged at the center of development, bringing added value and enrichment for the benefit of all.